BEFORE

THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF

SOUTH CAROLINA

DOCKET NO. 2013-7-G - ORDER NO. 2013-750

OCTOBER 15, 2013

IN RE:	Application of Piedmont Natural Gas)	INITIAL ORDER
	Company, Incorporated to Have the Terms of)	APPROVING
	the Natural Gas Rate Stabilization Act Apply)	QUARTERLY
	to the Company's Rates and Charges for Gas)	MONITORING REPORT
	Distribution Services)	AND ADOPTING
)	SETTLEMENT
)	AGREEMENT

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. §§ 58-5-420(2) and 58-5-455, a portion of the Natural Gas Rate Stabilization Act, as related to Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. (Piedmont or the Company). Order No. 2005-491 established a baseline return on equity for the Company under the Act, based on the Company's last rate case. See Order No. 2002-761. Section 58-5-455 sets out a procedure for the handling of monitoring reports under the Act related to the quarter ending March 31, which we detailed in Order No. 2005-491 at 5.

Briefly, under Section 58-5-455, the Company files the monitoring reports with the Commission and the Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS). Parties may comment on the reports. Where it appears to the Commission or ORS that an adjustment in rates may be warranted, ORS shall conduct an audit of the monitoring report and specify any changes that it determines are necessary to correct errors in the report or to otherwise bring the report into compliance with the statute. Parties may comment on the ORS audit. On or

before October 15, the Commission shall issue an initial order setting forth any changes required in the utility's request to adjust rates under the statute. Any gas rate adjustments authorized under the terms of the statute shall take effect for all bills rendered on or after the first billing cycle of November of that year. This present order is the "initial order" contemplated by S.C. Code Ann. Section 58-5-455 for Piedmont.

Pursuant to the South Carolina Natural Gas Rate Stabilization Act ("Act"), Piedmont submitted its quarterly monitoring report for the twelve-month period ending March 31, 2013, as well as the required revenue calculations and any proposed changes to its tariff rates necessary to permit Piedmont the opportunity to earn the rate of return on common equity established in its last general rate case as specified in Section 58-5-420(1).

The ORS conducted a review of Piedmont's Monitoring Report for the twelvemonth period ending March 31, 2013, to evaluate compliance with Section 58-5-430 and Section 58-5-440 of the Act. The ORS proposed certain adjustments to reported amounts to bring the report into conformance with those sections. Piedmont filed written comments advising the Commission that Piedmont had no objection to or comments on the findings and adjustments reflected in the ORS Audit Report.

A Settlement Agreement was reached by and among Piedmont and ORS (collectively, the Parties). The Settlement Agreement and exhibits are attached hereto as Order Exhibit 1. Under the terms of the Settlement Agreement, Piedmont will implement rates for the twelve-month period beginning with the first billing cycle of November 2013, calculated on the basis of an 11.3% return on equity (ROE). The Parties agree that

Piedmont will adopt the accounting adjustments of ORS as set forth in Schedule 2 attached to the Settlement Agreement. The Parties further agree that, based upon the accounting adjustments proposed by ORS and adopted by Piedmont, and the agreement of Piedmont to implement rates based upon an 11.3% ROE, South Carolina ratepayers will realize a decrease in current margin rates totaling \$70,470. The Settlement Agreement states that this equates to a reduction of \$2,582,737 for South Carolina ratepayers when compared to rates calculated on Piedmont's authorized 12.6% ROE, which was authorized by Commission Order Nos. 2002-761, 2005-491, and 2005-567. The Parties further agree to an increase in demand cost of \$1,982,857 due to a demand cost under-recovery.

We have examined the accounting and pro forma adjustments proposed and agreed upon by the parties, as well as the Settlement Agreement, and we take no exception to them.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 1. S.C. Code Ann. Section 58-5-455, a portion of the Natural Gas Rate Stabilization Act, requires the filing of certain documents and the issuance of this Initial Order.
 - 2. Changes are required to the Company's request to adjust rates.
- 3. ORS has suggested certain changes to which Piedmont does not object, as outlined above. Indeed, the parties have reached a Settlement Agreement.
- 4. This Commission has found no other changes appropriate or necessary other than those agreed to by the parties.

- 5. The Settlement Agreement is approved. This Commission adopts the changes and adjustments proposed by the parties and the resulting rates and charges.
- 6. The new approved rates and charges shall be effective for bills rendered on and after the first billing cycle in November 2013, subject to changes under the Company's Gas Cost Recovery Mechanism.
- If it has not already done so by the date of issuance of this Order, the 7. Company shall file its revised tariff utilizing the Commission's e-filing system for tariffs prior to its first billing cycle in November 2013. The revised tariff should be electronically filed in a text searchable PDF format using the Commission's DMS System (http://dms.psc.sc.gov). additional copy should be sent via email to An included in the Commission's ETariff etariff@psc.sc.gov to be (http://etariff.psc.sc.gov). Future revisions to the tariff should be made using the ETariff System. The revised tariff shall be consistent with the findings of this Order and shall be consistent with the Commission's Rules and Regulations, as well as the provisions of the Settlement Agreement.

8. This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

G. O'Neal Hamilton, Chairman

ATTEST:

Nikiya Hall Vice Chairman

(SEAL)

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October 15, 2013
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BEFORE

THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF

SOUTH CAROLINA

DOCKET NO. 2013-7-G

September 3, 2013

IN RE:	Application of Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Incorporated to Have the Terms of the Natural Gas Rate Stabilization Act Apply to the Company's Rates and Charges for Gas)	SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT
	Distribution Services)	

This Settlement Agreement is made by and among the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff ("ORS") and Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. ("PNG" or the "Company") (collectively referred to as the "Parties" or sometimes individually as a "Party").

WHEREAS, by Public Service Commission of South Carolina ("Commission") Order Nos. 2005-491 and 2005-567, dated September 28, 2005 and October 13, 2005, respectively, the Commission established a baseline for PNG under the Natural Gas Rate Stabilization Act (the "RSA") and approved certain accounting adjustments proposed by ORS and PNG;

WHEREAS, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 58-5-455 (Supp. 2012), PNG filed its Quarterly Monitoring Report and Proposed Rate Changes with the Commission on June 17, 2013 for the review period consisting of April 1, 2012 through March 31, 2013 ("Review Period");

WHEREAS, the Report of ORS's examination of PNG's Monitoring Report for the Twelve-Month Period Ending March 31, 2013, pursuant to the RSA, was filed with the Commission on August 30, 2013;

WHEREAS, the Parties to this Settlement Agreement are the only parties of record in the above-captioned docket;

WHEREAS, the Parties have engaged in discussions to determine if a settlement of this proceeding would be in their best interest; and,

WHEREAS, following those discussions, the Parties have each determined that their interests, and ORS has determined that the public interest, would be best served by settling the above-captioned case under the terms and conditions set forth below:

- 1. PNG will implement rates for the twelve-month period beginning with the first billing cycle of November 2013 calculated on the basis of an 11.3% Return on Equity ("ROE") instead of the 12.6% ROE approved by Commission Orders No. 2002-761, 2005-491, and 2005-567.
- 2. The Parties agree that the following are the only attachments to this Settlement Agreement: Schedule 1 (Net Operating Income and Rate of Return); Schedule 2 (Explanations of Accounting and Pro Forma Adjustments); and, Schedule 3 (Weighted Cost of Capital).
- 3. The Parties agree that PNG will adopt the accounting adjustments of ORS as set forth in Schedule 2 as attached to this Settlement Agreement.
- 4. The Parties agree that, based upon the accounting adjustments proposed by ORS and adopted by PNG, and the agreement of PNG to implement rates based on an 11.3% ROE, South Carolina ratepayers will realize a decrease in current margin rates totaling (\$70,470). This equates to a reduction of \$2,582,737 for South Carolina ratepayers when compared to rates calculated on PNG's filing at the authorized 12.6% ROE.
- 5. The Parties agree to an increase in demand cost of \$1,982,857, due to a demand cost under-recovery.

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6. As of the date of this Settlement Agreement, the Parties agree that the North

Carolina Utilities Commission has not issued an order in PNG's 2013 general rate case (Docket

No. G-9, Sub 631); therefore, to guarantee that PNG's South Carolina customers pay no more

than the Company's actual cost of gas, South Carolina's demand cost of gas allocation factor is

estimated to decrease from 16.01% to 14.92% in January 2014. The resulting change in the

South Carolina allocation factor will be a decrease of approximately \$200,000 on an annual

basis.

7. The Parties agree to cooperate in good faith with one another in recommending to

the Commission that this Settlement Agreement be accepted and approved by the Commission as

a fair, reasonable and full resolution of the above-captioned proceeding. The Parties agree to use

reasonable efforts to defend and support any Commission order issued approving this Settlement

Agreement and the terms and conditions contained herein.

8. The Parties agree that by signing this Settlement Agreement, it will not constrain,

inhibit or impair their arguments or positions in future proceedings. Should the Commission

decline to approve this Settlement Agreement in its entirety, then any Party desiring to do so may

withdraw from this Settlement Agreement without penalty.

9. This Settlement Agreement shall be interpreted according to South Carolina law.

10. Each Party acknowledges its consent and agreement to this Settlement Agreement

by authorizing its counsel to affix his or her signature to this document where indicated below.

Counsel's signature represents his or her representation that his or her client has authorized the

execution of the agreement. Facsimile signatures and e-mail signatures shall be as effective as

original signatures to bind any Party. This document may be signed in counterparts, with the

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various signature pages combined with the body of the document constituting an original and provable copy of this Settlement Agreement.

[PARTY SIGNATURES TO FOLLOW ON SEPARATE PAGES]

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Representing the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff

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Piedmont Natural Gas Company South Carolina Operations Net Operating Income and Rate of Return For the Test Year Ended March 31, 2013 Docket No. 2013-7-G

Settlement Schedule 1

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Settlement Schedule 2

Line <u>No.</u>		<u>Description</u>	Per Piedmont	Per ORS
1		Operating Revenues - Sale and Transportation of Gas		
		To increase revenues on a going-level basis.	\$ 19,217,810	\$ 19,217,810
		Total Operating Revenues - Sale and Transportation of Gas	\$ 19,217,810	\$ 19,217,810
2		Cost of Gas		
		To increase cost of gas on a going-level basis.	\$ 19,449,932	\$ 19,449,932
		Total Cost of Gas	\$ 19,449,932	\$ 19,449,932
3		Operations and Maintenance Expenses		
	a.	To annualize the payroll expense as of March 31, 2013 in conformance with PSC Order No. 2002-761, dated November 1, 2002.	\$ (737,290)	\$ (737,290)
	b.	To decrease expenses for the salary and payroll investment plan. The plan allows participants to defer a portion of their base salary and the Company matches a portion of the participant's contribution.	(8,168)	(8,168)
	c.	To adjust pension costs included in the filing.	(8,830)	(8,830)
	d.	To adjust uncollectible gas margin utilizing the method approved in Docket No. 2006-4-G, Order No. 2006-527, dated October 11, 2006. The applicable uncollectible margin rate is .23610%.	(29,066)	(29,066)
	e.	To decrease expenses for allocations to non-utility activities.	(24,977)	(24,977)
	f.	To increase expenses for the Long-Term Incentive Plan.	11,945	11,945
	g.	To decrease expenses for the Short-Term Incentive Plan.	(211,825)	(211,825)
	h.	To decrease expenses for the Mission Value Performance Incentive Plan.	(236,579)	(236,579)
	i.	To increase expenses for group insurance.	73,067	73,067
	j.	To increase expenses for the Piedmont Town Center lease.	10,953	10,953
	k.	To increase expenses for Piedmont Town Center Common Area Maintenance expense.	2,273	2,273
	1.	To increase expenses for amortization of early retirement incentive.	151,229	151,229
	m.	To increase expenses for the South Carolina assessment fee.	(9,848)	7,145

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Settlement Schedule 2

Line <u>No.</u>		<u>Description</u>		Per Piedmont	Per ORS
	n.	To decrease expenses for items that are nonallowable for ratemaking purposes.		(157,282)	(374,204)
	0.	To adjust for Gas Technology Institute expenses.		0	0
	p.	To adjust for South Carolina Environmental expense.	_	21,940	21,940
		Total Operations and Maintenance Expense	\$ _	(1,152,458) \$	(1,352,387)
4		Depreciation Expense			
		To increase depreciation expense on a going-level basis using the most current depreciation study rates.	\$_	456,712 \$	456,712
		Total Depreciation Expense	\$ _	456,712 \$	456,712
5		General Taxes			
	a.	To decrease property taxes on a going-level basis.	\$	(2,582) \$	(2,582)
	b.	To decrease payroll tax expense.		(135,253)	(135,253)
	c.	To increase franchise taxes (rate of .3%) and gross receipts tax (rate of .219435%) for the adjustment made to increase revenues on a going-level basis.		96,207	99,824
		Total General Taxes	\$.	(41,628) \$	(38,011)
6		State Income Taxes			
		To adjust state income taxes (rate of 5%) to reflect the impact on income for accounting and pro forma adjustments.	\$ _	(350,764) \$	(341,001)
		Total State Income Taxes	\$.	(350,764) \$	(341,001)
7		Federal Income Taxes			
		To adjust federal income taxes (rate of 35%) to reflect the impact on income for accounting and pro forma adjustments.	\$.	224,638 \$	289,558
		Total Federal Income Taxes	\$	224,638 \$	289,558
8		Allowance for Funds Used during Construction (AFUDC)			
		To adjust AFUDC to reflect projects placed into service after November 1, 2012.	\$.	(18,180)	(18,180)
		Total AFUDC	\$	(18,180)	(18,180)

Settlement Schedule 2

9		-	Piedmont	_	Per ORS
	Customer Growth				
	To adjust net operating income to reflect an anticipated increase in customer growth (rate of .61%) for the adjustments to operating revenues and expenses.	\$_	3,851	s _	4,593
	Total Customer Growth	\$_	3,851	\$ _	4,593
10	Cash Working Capital				
	To decrease cash working capital for the pro forma adjustments to operation and maintenance expenses (rate of 12.5%).	\$_	(144,057)	s _	(169,049)
	Total Cash Working Capital	\$ =	(144,057)	\$ _	(169,049)
11	Unclaimed Funds				
	To decrease unclaimed funds for utility deposits transferred to SC State Treasurer during the test period.	\$_	0	_	(69,622)
	Total Unclaimed Funds	\$.	0		(69,622)
12	Operating Revenues - Sale and Transportation of Gas				
	To decrease revenues from the sale and transportation of gas for the proposed margin decrease. ORS has recalculated this adjustment utilizing all ORS adjustments to operating revenues.	\$_	2,512,267	s _	(70,470)
	Total Operating Revenues - Sale and Transportation of Gas	\$_	2,512,267	\$_	(70,470)
13	Operations and Maintenance Expenses				
	To adjust the provision for uncollectible accounts (.23610%) for the proposed margin decrease.	\$.	5,931	s _	(166)
	Total Operations and Maintenance Expenses	\$_	5,931	\$_	(166)
14	General Taxes				
	To adjust franchise taxes (rate of .3%) and gross receipts tax (rate of .219435%) for the proposed margin decrease.	\$_	12,577	\$_	(366)
	Total General Taxes	\$_	12,577	\$ _	(366)

Settlement Schedule 2

Line <u>No.</u>	Description		Per Piedmont		Per ORS
15	State Income Taxes				
	To adjust state income taxes (rate of 5%) to reflect the impact on income from the proposed margin decrease.	\$	124,688	s _	(3,497)
	Total State Income Taxes	\$	124,688	\$ _	(3,497)
16	Federal Income Taxes				
	To adjust federal income taxes (rate of 35%) to reflect the impact on income from the proposed margin decrease.	\$_	829,175	s _	(23,254)
	Total Federal Income Taxes	\$ _	829,175	\$_	(23,254)
17	Customer Growth				
	To adjust net operating income to reflect an anticipated increase in customer growth (rate of .61%) for the proposed margin decrease.	\$	9,393	\$_	(263)
	Total Customer Growth	\$ _	9,393	\$ _	(263)
18	Operating Revenues - Sale and Transportation of Gas				
	To increase the revenue requirement for the sale and transportation of gas associated with demand cost under-recovery.	\$_	1,982,481	\$_	1,982,857
	Total Operating Revenues - Sale and Transportation of Gas	\$.	1,982,481	\$ _	1,982,857
19	Cost of Gas				
	To increase cost of gas for the demand cost under-recovery using a demand cost allocation factor of 16.01%, based upon the most recent design day study.	\$_	1,967,875	\$_	1,967,875
	Total Cost of Gas	\$ _	1,967,875	\$ _	1,967,875
20	Operations and Maintenance Expenses				
	To increase the provision for uncollectible accounts (rate of .23610%) following the adjustment for demand cost under-recovery.	\$_	4,681	\$_	4,682
	Total Operations and Maintenance Expenses	\$	4,681	\$ _	4,682
	Total Operations and Maintenance Expenses	- 2			
21	General Taxes	. =			
21		s	9,925	\$_	10,300

Piedmont Natural Gas Company South Carolina Operations Weighted Cost of Capital For the Test Year Ended March 31, 2013 Docket No. 2013-7-G

				Regulatory Per Books	Per Books			As Adjusted	usted	8		After Proposed Decreas	sed Decrease	
Description	Capital	Ratio	Rate Base	Embedded Overail Cost/Return	Overail Cost/Return	Income For Return	Rate Base	Embedded Cost/Return	Overall Cost/Return	Income For Return	Rate Base	Embedded Cost/Return	Overall Cost/Return	Net Operating Income
Set.	1,118,815,559 47.00% 100,623,417	47.00%	100,623,417	5.07%	2.38%	5,101,607	100,576,686	5.07%	2.38%	5,099,238	100,576,686	5.07%	2.38%	5,099,238
Common Equity	1,261,643,07	53.00%	113,468,959	10.68%	2.66%	12,117,698	113,416,263	11.34%	6.01%	12,859,487	113,416,263	11.30%	5.99%	12,816,037
Total	2,380,458,636 100.00%	100.00%	214,092,376		8.04%	17,219,305	213,992,949		8.39%	17,958,725	213,992,949		8.37%	17,915,275